

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT,EINV, PLOS, SE

SUBJECT: SEYCHELLES NATION ASSEMBLY CONVENES, ADOPTS FORIEGN
INVESTMENT RESOLUTION

1. SEYCHELLES NATIONAL ASSEMBLY CONVENED SEPTEMBER 1 FOR FIRST SESSIO
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SINCE INDEPENDENCE. COALITION GOVERNMENT FUNCTIONED SMOOTHLY,
WITH PRIME MINISTER RENE ASSUMING NEW ROLE AS LEADER OF GOVERN-
MENT BUSINESS. GOVERNMENT MINISTERS FROM BOTH PARTIES DISPLAYED
UNIFIED POSITION IN FACE OF OCCASIONALLY BARBED CRITICISM BY
BACKBENCH MEMBERS OF ASSEMBLY.

2. MAJOR THEME RUNNING THROUGH DEBATE WAS STRONG FEELING OF
ECONOMIC NATIONALISM, TEMPERED BY AWARENESS OF SEYCHELLES
DEPENDENCE ON FOREIGN ASSISTANCE AND CERTAIN AMOUNT OF GROPING
TO DETERMINE WHERE REAL NATIONAL ECONOMIC INTERESTS LIE.
WHILE MOST SPEAKERS EXPRESSED VIEWS IN MODERATE TERMS, A FEW
INDULGED IN RHETORIC ABOUT FOREIGN "PARASITES" EXPLOITING
SEYCHELLES ECONOMY, OR BLAMED FORMER COLONIAL MASTERS FOR
UNSATISFACTORY SITUATION IN CERTAIN SECTORS.

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3. HARBINGER OF FUTURE GOS ATTITUDE TOWARD FOREIGN INVESTMENT WAS RESOLUTION INTRODUCED BY SPUP MEMBER JACQUES HODOUL. TEXT OF RESOLUTION AS ADOPTED READS AS FOLLOWS: "THIS ASSEMBLY BELIEVES THAT CERTAIN SECTORS OF OUR ECONOMY OUGHT TO BE RESERVED EXCLUSIVELY FOR SEYCHELLOIS AND IF A COMPANY REGISTERED IN SEYCHELLES ENGAGES ITSELF IN SUCH A SECTOR, NOT LESS THAN 75 PERCENT OF ITS SHARE CAPITAL SHOULD BE HELD BY SEYCHELLOIS." GOVERNMENT GAVE ITS SUPPORT TO RESOLUTION AFTER INSISTING SUCCESSFULLY THAT PROVISION BARRING FOREIGN DIRECTORS BE DELETED.

4. SPONSOR OF RESOLUTION HODOUL (WHO EDITS SPUP LEFTIST PERIODICAL "THE PEOPLE") EXPLAINED IN DEBATE THAT HIS OBJECTIVE WAS TO ESTABLISH IN PRINCIPLE THAT FOREIGNERS WOULD BE EXCLUDED FROM CERTAIN TYPES OF ECONOMIC ACTIVITY, WHILE LEAVING IT TO APPROPRIATE MINISTERS TO ELABORATE PRECISELY WHICH SECTORS WOULD BE AFFECTED. HE OFFERED PERSONAL OPINION THAT ACTIVITIES RESERVED FOR SEYCHELLOIS SHOULD INCLUDE ARTS/ CRAFTS MARKETING, BOTTOM FISHING, PROCESSING AND EXPORT OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCE, ROAD TRANSPORT, INTERISLAND SEA TRANSPORT, SMALL HOTELS AND GUEST HOUSES AND PLEASURE BOAT CHARTERING. HE CONCEDED IT WOULD BE UNREALISTIC TO EXCLUDE FOREIGNERS FROM LARGE, CAPITAL-INTENSIVE BUSINESSES.

5. ASSEMBLY CONCLUDED SESSION SEPTEMBER 2 WITH PASSAGE OF 16 PIECES OF GOVERNMENT LEGISLATION. ONE BILL AMENDED CONSTITUTION TO MAKE FRENCH A SECOND OFFICIAL LANGUAGE OF SEYCHELLES, THUS MAKING GOS ELIGIBLE FOR CERTAIN TYPES OF AID GIVEN BY FRANCE TO FRANCOPHONE COUNTRIES. ANOTHER BILL GAVE POWER OF SETTING LIMITS OF TERRITORIAL SEA AND CONTINENTAL SHELF TO PRESIDENT; IN INTRODUCING MEASURE, GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCED INTENTION OF FOLLOWING ICELAND'S EXAMPLE AND EXTENDING TERRITORIAL SEA TO 200 MILES. WELL-INFORMED CIVIL SERVANT TOLD CHARGE, HOWEVER, THAT SEYCHELLES WOULD ADHERE TO LOS TREATY IF ONE WERE AGREED AND TREATY PROVISIONS WOULD SUPERSEDE UNILATERAL DECISION ON TERRITORIAL SEA.
KAMMAN

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